on 17 January, 2006, the US Department of State and Department of Homeland Security announced measures to speed up the processing of US visas. It is Government's understanding that to decrease the waiting time for visa appointments for travellers, American Embassies and Consulates have now established procedures to expedite the processing of business visas and are working closely with local American Chambers of Commerce in many countries to expedite the visa process for *bona fide* business travellers.

(b) and (c) Government is also aware that US authorities also announced that in coming months, US Homeland and State Department will work to extend the length of time that foreign students can live in the US. Student visas would be issued up to 120 days before classes begin, as compared to 90 days under current regulations, and students would be allowed into the US 45 days in advance of their studies, as compared to 30 days at present.

Reusable space vehicle technology

*87. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization) has developed low-cost reusable space vehicle technology;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) to what extent it would help to make space transport more affordable?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, a few investigative studies and experiments have been taken up which might lead to the development of reusable space vehicles technology. It is expected that this, in turn, will make space transport more affordable on account of the reuse of expensive hardware. However, it is difficult to make an assessment of the extent of affordability at this preliminary juncture.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.